

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:  
Please rewrite claim 21 as follows.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (previously presented): A ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber comprising:

a plurality of polarization-maintaining fibers; and  
a ribbon portion having first and second lateral ends, and a length of 2 to 300 mm surrounding at least some of the polarization-maintaining fibers, the polarization-maintaining fibers extending individually from the second lateral end of the ribbon portion.

Claim 2 (original): The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 1, wherein said ribbon portion is one formed by fixing and coating said polarization-maintaining fibers with an adhesive, and aligning end faces of said polarization-maintaining fibers which are used at least as a signal so as to become a predetermined plane of polarization.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 1, said ribbon portion further comprising positioning means for maintaining alignment of said polarization-maintaining fibers.

Claim 4 (original): The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 3, wherein said positioning means is formed as a series of convex and concave shapes.

Claim 5 (original): The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 4, wherein said convex and concave shapes are disposed at a regular pitch or discontinuously.

Claim 6 (original): The ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 5, wherein said convex and concave shapes are formed as a saw tooth shape or a curved wavy shape.

Claims 7-19 (cancelled).

Claim 20 (original): A polarization-maintaining optical fiber array made of a ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 1.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A ~~The~~ ribboned polarization-maintaining fiber according to claim 1, comprising:

a plurality of polarization-maintaining fibers; and  
a ribbon portion having first and second lateral ends, and a length of 2 to 300 mm  
surrounding at least some of the polarization-maintaining fibers, the polarization-maintaining  
fibers extending individually from the second lateral end of the ribbon portion.

wherein said ribbon portion comprises a material that can be stripped to expose the polarization-maintaining fibers.